

Andabatae Horseback fighters; from the Greek “αναβάται” (ascensores) because they fought on horseback. They wore mail like eastern cavalry (Cataphracti) and wore visored helmets without eye holes. They charged at one another on horseback similar to a medieval joust but without being able to see each other.

Arbelas Crescent Knife Fighter; likely a renaming of the Scissor, the Arbelas was armed with a dagger in his right hand, and wore a Secutor-type helmet, chain or scale covering his torso to the knees, a quilted manica on the right arm and a tubular vambrace with a crescent-shaped blade (similar to that used by shoemakers, and where the name Arbelas comes from) on the end on his left arm. From surviving artwork it seems he only fought his own kind, or the Retiarius.

Bestiarii Animal fighters; men specializing in fighting various types of exotic, imported beasts with spears. The fights were arranged in such a way that there was small chance the animals would win. On occasion condemned criminals also fought animals in the arena, but under less favored conditions. Bestiarii were technically not considered gladiators as they did not fight other men.

Bustuarii Funeral fighters; these fought in honour of a deceased person as part of his funeral rites.

Dimachaerii Double sworded fighters; from the Greek "διμάχαιρος" (bearing two knives). Used two swords, one in each hand.

Equites Horsemen; in early depictions, these lightly-armed gladiators wear scale armour, a medium-sized round cavalry shield (*parma equestris*), and a brimmed helmet without a crest, but with two decorative feathers. In Imperial times, they sport an arm-guard (*manica*) on their right arm and sleeveless, belted tunics, in contrast to other gladiators who usually fought bare-chested, and no greaves. At least in Isidore of Seville's times, the *Equitis* rode white horses and opened a day's program of fights (*Origines*, 18.53ff.). They started on horseback, but after they had thrown their lance (*hasta*), they dismounted and continued to fight on foot with their short sword (*gladius*). Generally, *Equites* only fought other *Equites*.

Essedarii War-chariot fighters; from the Latin word for a Celtic war-chariot, *Esseda*. Likely first brought to Rome from Britain by Caesar. *Essedarii* appear as arena-fighters in many inscriptions after the first century A.D. Yet since no pictorial representations exist, we do not know anything about their equipment and manner of fighting. The traditional way of Celtic chariots, breaking a hole in the enemy line with a quick charge, deploying an elite warrior to keep it open and then retreating could have been used only in the mass battles that were sometimes arranged.

Galli Gauls; used a lance, helmet and a small Gallic shield.

Hoplomachi Shield fighters; from the Greek "οπλομάχος" (armed fighters). They wore quilted, trouser-like leg wrappings, maybe made from linen, a loincloth, a belt, a pair of long shin-guards or greaves, an arm guard (*manica*) on the left arm, and a brimmed helmet that could be adorned with a plume of feathers on top and a single feather on each side. Equipped with a *gladius* and a very small, round shield made of one sheet of thick bronze (an example from Pompeii survives) and a spear, (which the gladiator would have to cast before closing for hand to hand combat). They were paired against *Myrmillonis* or *Thraecis*. They may have developed out of the earlier *Samnitis* after it became "politically incorrect" to use the names of now allied peoples.

Laquearii Lasso fighters; Laquearii may have been a kind of *Retiarius* who tried to catch their adversaries with a lasso (*laqueus*) instead of a net. They also used daggers with which they were equipped once they snared their opponents.

Myrmillones "Fishmen"; wore a helmet with a stylised fish on the crest (the *mormylos* or sea fish), as well as an arm guard (*manica*), a loincloth and belt, a gaiter on his right leg, thick wrappings covering the tops of his feet, and a very short greave with an indentation for the padding at the top of the feet. *Myrmillonis* carried a *gladius* (40-50 cm long) and a tall, oblong shield in the legionary style. They were paired with *Thraecis*, occasionally also with the similar *Hoplomachi*.

Noxii Criminals; these were condemned criminals who fought each other. Sometimes one had a weapon and was blindfolded while the other was unarmed but had no blindfold. Sometimes they both fought with blindfolds with two referees (and the audience) giving them directions. The audience was known to yell wrong directions at times for their own amusement.

Paegniarii Used a whip, club, and a shield which was fixed to the left arm with straps.

Praegenarii These were used as an opening act to get the crowd in the mood. They used a wooden sword (*Rudis*) and wore wrappings around the body. As they fought, they were accompanied by light-hearted comical music using cymbals, trumpets, and a water organ (*hydraulis*).

Provocatores Challengers; their armament, in the late Republican and early Imperial era, mirrored standard issue legionary armature. In the later Imperial period, their armament ceased to reflect its military origins, and changes in armament followed changes in arena fashion only. They have been shown wearing a loincloth, a belt, a long greave on the left leg, a *manica* on the lower right arm, and a visored helmet without brim or crest, but with a feather on each side. They were the only gladiators protected by a breastplate (*cardiophylax*) which is usually rectangular, later often crescent-shaped. They fought with a tall, rectangular shield and the *gladius*. They were only ever paired against other *Provocatores*.

Retiarii Net fighters; developed in the early Augustan era, the retiarius carried a trident, a dagger, and a net. Except for a loincloth held in place by a wide belt and a larger arm guard (*manica*) extending to the shoulder and left side of the chest the *Retiarius* fought without the protection of a helmet. Occasionally a metal shoulder shield (*galerus*) was added to protect the neck and lower face. A tombstone found in Romania shows a *Retiarius* holding a dagger with four spikes (each at the corner of a square guard) instead of the usual bladed dagger. This was previously thought to be an artistic invention or perhaps a ceremonial weapon but a recent discovery of a Gladiator graveyard found that several of the remains had four odd-looking marks that form the outline of a square on their bones which is consistent with the use of such a weapon. A variation to the normal combat was a *Retiarius* facing two *secutores* at the same time. He stood on a bridge or raised platform with stairs and had a pile of fist-sized stones to throw at his adversaries and keep them at bay while the *Secutores* tried to scale the structure to get at him. The platform (called a *pons*, "bridge") may have been constructed over water. *Retiarii* usually always fought *Secutores* but sometimes *Myrmillones*.

Rudarii Free gladiators; a gladiator who had won his freedom (received his wooden sword or *rudis*) but chose to remain a gladiator. Not all continued to fight and there was a hierarchy of *rudarii* such as trainers, helpers, referees, fighters etc. These were very popular with the public as they were experienced and could be relied on to provide a good show.

Sagittarii Mounted bowmen; these were armed with a reflex bow capable of propelling an arrow a great distance.

Samnites Samnites; the *Samnis*, an early type of heavily-armed fighter that disappears in the early imperial period, point to the Campanian origins of gladiatorial contests because the Samnites were a powerful league of Italian tribes in the region of Campania south of Rome against which the Romans fought three major wars between 326 and 291 BC. A *Samnis* was armed with a long rectangular shield (*scutum*), a plumed helmet, a short sword, and probably a greave on his left leg. It was frequently said that Samnites were the lucky ones since they got large shields and good swords.

Scissores Carvers; little is known about this type of gladiator apart from the name and the weapon they used. They used a special short sword called the Roman Scissor. This sword had two blades (that looked like a pair of open scissors but without a hinge). It is speculated that they attempted to trap their opponent's weapon between the twin blades in order to disarm them.

Secutores Pursuers; this kind of fighter, specifically developed to fight the *Retiarius*, was a variant of the *Myrmillo* and wore the same armour and weapons, including the tall rectangular shield and the *gladius*. His helmet, however, covered the entire face with the exception of two small eye-holes in order to protect his face from the thin prongs of the trident of his opponent. The helmet was almost round and smooth so that the *retiarius* net could not get a grip on it.

Tertiarii / Suppositicii Substitutes; in some games three men were matched against each other. The first two would fight with the winner then fighting the third man, this third man is the *Tertiarius*. *Tertiarii* would also act as a replacement (substitute) if an advertised gladiator was unable to fight.

Thraeces Thracians; these wore the same protective armour as the *Hoplomachi* with a broad-rimmed helmet that enclosed the entire head, distinguished by a stylized griffin on the protome or front of the crest (the griffin was the companion of the avenging goddess Nemesis), a small round or square-shaped shield (*parmula*), and two thigh-length greaves. His weapon was the Thracian curved sword (*sica* or *falx*, c. 34 cm/13 in long). They were introduced as replacements for the Gauls after Gaul made peace with Rome. They commonly fought *Myrmillones* or *Hoplomachi*.

Velites Skirmishers; fought on foot, each holding a spear with an attached thong for throwing. Named for the early and similarly armed Republican army units of the same name.

Venatores Hunters; specialized in wild animal hunts instead of fighting them as the *Bestiarii* did. As well as hunting they also performed tricks with animals such as putting an arm in a lion's mouth, riding a camel while leading lions on a leash, and making an elephant walk a tightrope (Seneca, *Ep.* 85.41). Technically they were not gladiators but were still a part of the games.